

CLAIMS

1. A method for facilitating remote access by a mail client to a mail server via an intermediary server, said method comprising:

5 (a) receiving a mail access request at the intermediary server, the mail access request being sent to the intermediary server from the mail client for a requestor;

(b) receiving a password associated with the mail access request;

10 (c) authenticating the requestor with the mail server based on the received password;

(d) authenticating the requestor with an authentication server based on the received password, the authentication server being associated with a private network that includes the mail server; and

15 (e) permitting the mail access request when both the mail server and the authentication server authenticate the requestor.

2. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein a mail server password and an authentication server password are included in or derived from the received password,

20 wherein said authenticating (c) authenticates the requestor with the mail server using the mail server password, and

wherein said authenticating (d) authenticates the requestor with the authentication server using the authentication server password.

25 3. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein said authenticating (d) comprises:

(d1) retrieving a previously stored hashed password associated with the requestor or the mail client;

30 (d2) determining whether a hashed version of the received password matches the previously stored hashed password;

(d3) authenticating the requestor with the authentication server based on the received password; and

(d4) bypassing said authenticating (d3) and treating the received password as having been authenticated when said determining (d2)

5 determines that the hashed version of the received password matches the previously stored hashed password.

10 4. A method as recited in claim 3, wherein a mail server password and an authentication server password are included in or derived from the received password,

wherein said authenticating (c) authenticates the requestor with the mail server using the mail server password, and

wherein said authenticating (d) authenticates the requestor with the authentication server using the authentication server password.

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5. A method as recited in claim 3,

wherein said receiving (d1) further includes at least retrieving a time last authorized by the authentication server, and

wherein said method further comprises:

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(d5) determining whether the time last authorized by the authentication server exceeds a first predetermined duration; and

(d6) preventing said bypassing (d4) from bypassing said authenticating (d3) when said determining (d5) determines that the time last authorized by the authentication server exceeds the first predetermined

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6. A method as recited in claim 5, wherein the first predetermined duration is a maximum session duration.

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7. A method as recited in claim 5, wherein a mail server password and an authentication server password are included in or derived from the received password,

wherein said authenticating (c) authenticates the requestor with the mail server using the mail server password, and

wherein said authenticating (d) authenticates the requestor with the authentication server using the authentication server password.

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8. A method as recited in claim 3,

wherein said receiving (d1) further includes at least retrieving a time last used password, and

wherein said method further comprises:

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(d5) determining whether the time last used password exceeds a second predetermined duration; and

(d6) preventing said bypassing (d4) from bypassing said authenticating (d3) when said determining (d5) determines that the time last used password exceeds the second predetermined duration.

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9. A method as recited in claim 8, wherein the second predetermined duration is a maximum idle duration.

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10. A method as recited in claim 9, wherein a mail server password and an authentication server password are included in or derived from the received password,

wherein said authenticating (c) authenticates the requestor with the mail server using the mail server password, and

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wherein said authenticating (d) authenticates the requestor with the authentication server using the authentication server password.

11. A method for authenticating a requestor of a remote mail client seeking access to a mail server, said method comprising:

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(a) receiving a password from the remote mail client;

(b) retrieving a previously stored hashed password;

(c) determining whether a hashed version of the received password matches the previously stored hashed password;

(d) authenticating the requestor with the mail server based on the received password; and

(e) further authenticating the requestor with an authentication server based on the received password when said determining (c) determines that the hashed version of the received password does not match the previously stored hashed password, the authentication server being associated with a private network that includes the mail server.

12. A method as recited in claim 11, wherein the received password is an authentication password, and wherein the authentication password serves to authenticate the requestor or the remote mail client to the authentication server.

13. A method as recited in claim 11, wherein said receiving (a) further receives a time last authorized by the authentication server,

wherein said determining (c) further determines whether the time since the time last authorized by the authentication server exceeds a first predetermined duration, and

wherein said authenticating (e) is performed when said determining (c) determines that the time since the time last authorized by the authentication server exceeds the first predetermined duration, regardless of whether said determining (c) determines that the hashed version of the received password matches the previously stored hashed password.

14. A method as recited in claim 11, wherein said receiving (a) further receives a time last used password, wherein said determining (c) further determines whether the time since the time last used password exceeds a second predetermined duration, and wherein said authenticating (e) is performed when said determining (c) determines that the time since the time last used password exceeds the second predetermined duration, regardless of whether said determining (c)

determines that the hashed version of the received password matches the previously stored hashed password.

15. A method as recited in claim 11,

5 wherein said receiving (a) further receives a time last authorized by the authentication server and a time last used password,

wherein said determining (c) further determines whether the time since the time last authorized by the authentication server exceeds a first predetermined duration and whether the time since the time last used password exceeds a second predetermined duration, and

10 wherein said authenticating (e) is performed when said determining (c) determines that the time since the time last authorized by the authentication server exceeds the first predetermined duration or that the time since the time last used password exceeds the second predetermined duration, regardless
15 of whether said determining (c) determines that the hashed version of the received password matches the previously stored hashed password.

16. A method as recited in claim 15, wherein the received password is an authentication password, and wherein the authentication password serves to
20 authenticate the requestor or the remote mail client to the authentication server.

17. A method as recited in claim 15, wherein the first predetermined duration is a maximum session duration, and wherein the second
25 predetermined duration is a maximum idle duration.

18. A computer readable medium including at least computer program code for facilitating remote access by a mail client to a mail server via an intermediary server, said computer readable medium comprising:

30 computer program code for receiving a mail access request at the intermediary server, the mail access request being sent to the intermediary server from the mail client for a requestor;

computer program code for receiving a password associated with the mail access request;

computer program code for authenticating the requestor with the mail server based on the received password;

5 computer program code for authenticating the requestor with an authentication server based on the received password, the authentication server being associated with a private network that includes the mail server; and

10 computer program code for permitting the mail access request when both the mail server and the authentication server authenticate the requestor.

19. A computer readable medium as recited in claim 18, wherein a mail server password and an authentication server password are included in or derived from the received password,

15 wherein said computer program code for authenticating operates to authenticate the requestor with the mail server using the mail server password, and

20 wherein said computer program code for authenticating operates to authenticate the requestor with the authentication server using the authentication server password.

20. A computer readable medium as recited in claim 18, wherein said computer program code for authenticating comprises:

25 computer program code for retrieving a previously stored hashed password associated with the requestor or the mail client;

computer program code for determining whether a hashed version of the received password matches the previously stored hashed password;

computer program code for authenticating the requestor with the authentication server based on the received password; and

30 computer program code for bypassing the authenticating and treating the received password as having been authenticated when said computer program code for determining determines that the hashed version of the received password matches the previously stored hashed password.

21. A computer readable medium including at least computer program code for authenticating a requestor of a remote mail client seeking access to a mail server, said computer readable medium comprising:

5 computer program code for receiving a password from the remote mail client;

computer program code for retrieving a previously stored hashed password;

10 computer program code for determining whether a hashed version of the received password matches the previously stored hashed password;

computer program code for authenticating the requestor with the mail server based on the received password; and

15 computer program code for authenticating the requestor with an authentication server based on the received password when said computer program code for determining determines that the hashed version of the received password does not match the previously stored hashed password, the authentication server being associated with a private network that includes the mail server.

20 22. A computer readable medium as recited in claim 21, wherein the received password is an authentication password, and wherein the authentication password serves to authenticate the requestor or the remote mail client to the authentication server.

25 23. A computer readable medium as recited in claim 21, wherein said computer program code for receiving further receives a time last authorized by the authentication server,

30 wherein said computer program code for determining further determines whether the time since the time last authorized by the authentication server exceeds a predetermined duration, and

wherein the authenticating is performed by said computer program code for authenticating when said computer program code for determining determines that the time since the time last authorized by the authentication

server exceeds the predetermined duration, regardless of whether said computer program code for determining determines that the hashed version of the received password matches the previously stored hashed password.